

# Parent Guide to Helping Kids Set and Reach Goals



*A practical guide to help kids choose one clear goal, make a plan, take small steps, stay focused, and follow through.*

Created by: Horizon ATA Martial Arts | Parent Resources Guide | Last reviewed: June 2026



## ★ GOALS TEACH MORE THAN ACHIEVEMENT

Goal setting is not just about getting something done. It helps kids learn how to choose a goal, make a plan, take action, stay focused, ask for help, and keep going when the goal feels hard.

Confidence grows through effort, practice, and follow-through over time.

➤ *Goals help kids learn how to keep going.* ➤

## ✓ CORE MESSAGE

**A goal is not just something I want.  
A goal is something I work toward  
one step at a time.**

Strong goal-setting habits help kids grow.

- ✓ Choose one clear goal
- ✓ Make a simple plan
- ✓ Take one small step
- ✓ Stay focused
- ✓ Ask for help
- ✓ Keep going
- ✓ Notice progress
- ✓ Celebrate effort



## 🌀 HORIZON LIFE SKILL CONNECTION



### Primary Life Skills:

Discipline, Responsibility, Focus, Confidence



### Supporting Life Skills:

Perseverance, Self-Control, Belief, Respect

In martial arts, students work toward skills, stripes, belts, and habits over time. They learn that big goals are built from small, consistent steps—and that discipline and effort make progress possible.



## PARENT REMINDER

The goal is not to make kids perfect. The goal is to help kids practice effort, ownership, and progress. When parents praise the process, kids learn that the work matters just as much as the finish line.



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# The Horizon Goal-Setting Framework

Choose One Goal. Make a Plan. Take Small Steps. Stay Focused. Follow Through.



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## 1 CHOOSE ONE CLEAR GOAL

Kids do best when they choose one clear goal instead of trying to fix everything at once. One goal helps them focus their energy and succeed.



### EXAMPLES OF CLEAR GOALS

- ★ Practice my form three times this week.
- ★ Read for 10 minutes each night.
- ★ Make my bed before school.
- ★ Use listening eyes and ears during homework.
- ★ Finish my chores without reminders.

## 2 MAKE A PLAN

A goal needs a plan. The plan tells you what to do next so you are not guessing.



### A GOOD PLAN INCLUDES:

- When to practice
- Where to practice
- Who can help
- What the first step is
- What to do if it gets hard
- How to know you are making progress

## 3 TAKE ONE SMALL STEP

Big goals feel easier when kids focus on one small step at a time. Small steps build momentum and confidence.



### PARENT SCRIPT

*You do not have to finish the whole goal today. You only need to take the next step.*

## 4 STAY FOCUSED

Focus helps kids stay on task even when there are distractions. Use the Horizon focus language.

- Get your body ready.
- Use listening eyes and ears.
- Start the first time.
- Stay with the task.
- Finish strong.



## 5 ASK FOR HELP

Asking for help is part of goal setting. Helpers can support, encourage, and guide you.



### EXAMPLES OF HELPERS

- Parent • Teacher • Coach  
Instructor • Teammate  
Sibling • Friend

## 6 KEEP GOING

Goals often get hard. Forgetting, frustration, nervousness, or wanting to quit is normal. The key is to keep trying.



### PARENT SCRIPT

*This feels hard right now, but hard does not mean impossible. What can you try next?*

## 7 NOTICE PROGRESS

Noticing progress helps kids see that effort leads to growth. Celebrate small wins!



- ✔ Remembered my goal today.
- ✔ Took one small step.
- ✔ Kept going when it was hard.
- ✔ Asked for help.
- ✔ Practiced a little more.
- ✔ Finished strong.
- ✔ Learned what to try next.



### EXPERT NOTE

Planning, focusing attention, and managing steps are executive function skills that help children set goals and follow through.

— Harvard Center on the Developing Child

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# What Parents Can Do

*Coach the process. Do not carry the goal.*



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## 1 START WITH THE CHILD'S GOAL

Kids are more likely to keep going when the goal feels connected to them.

Ask questions that help your child own the goal:

- ✓ What is something you want to get better at?
- ✓ Why does this goal matter to you?
- ✓ What would make you proud this week?
- ✓ What is one goal that feels possible?
- ✓ What would be a good first step?



## 2 KEEP THE GOAL SIMPLE

Clear goals are easier to remember and act on.

### VAGUE GOALS

Be better at school

Be more responsible

Get better at martial arts

### CLEAR GOALS

Put my homework folder in my backpack every night.

Feed the dog after dinner each day.

Practice my form for 10 minutes, three times this week.

## 3 HELP WITHOUT TAKING OVER

### HELPFUL SUPPORT

- ✓ Ask guiding questions
- ✓ Help remember the plan
- ✓ Practice together
- ✓ Give encouragement
- ✓ Help reset after a mistake
- ✓ Celebrate effort

### LESS HELPFUL SUPPORT

- ✗ Do the goal for the child
- ✗ Turn the goal into a lecture
- ✗ Criticize every mistake
- ✗ Change the goal constantly
- ✗ Make the goal only about rewards
- ✗ Expect perfection

## 4 PRAISE PROGRESS, NOT JUST RESULTS

Use specific praise that connects to the effort and the steps.

- ✓ "I noticed you started right away."
- ✓ "You kept going even when it felt hard."
- ✓ "You asked for help instead of quitting."
- ✓ "You remembered your goal today."
- ✓ "You finished all the steps."



**EXPERT NOTE:** Research from the Child Mind Institute shows that specific praise works best when it connects to the behavior parents want to encourage.

## 5 ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

- ✓ What step did you take today?
- ✓ What felt hard?
- ✓ What helped you keep going?
- ✓ What are you proud of?
- ✓ What is your next step?
- ✓ Who helped you?
- ✓ What will you try tomorrow?

Good questions build confidence.

## 6 WHEN KIDS LOSE MOTIVATION

This is normal. It can mean the goal is too big, the next step is unclear, the child is tired, or they need encouragement.



### PARENT REMINDER

You do not have to be perfect. You just have to stay involved. Your support helps your child build habits, confidence, and the skills to reach any goal they set.



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# Focus and Responsibility Help Goals Stick

Focus helps kids stay with the task.  
Responsibility helps kids own the task.



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Goal setting works best when kids practice two important skills: Focus and Responsibility. These skills help kids follow through, build confidence, and reach their goals. The tools on this page make it simple to practice these skills every day at home.

➤ *Two skills. Many wins.* ➤

## ✓ 1. USE THE KIDS FOCUS CHART

The Focus Chart helps children practice getting the body ready, using listening eyes and ears, starting the first time, staying with the task, and finishing strong.

### HOW TO USE IT

Try these Focus Missions:

- ✓ Start homework the first time
- ✓ Finish bedtime routine
- ✓ Stay with reading for 10 minutes
- ✓ Complete a chore before playing
- ✓ Practice martial arts form without reminders



*Parent Script: "This chart helps us practice focus. We are looking for effort, not perfection."*

## ⌘ 2. USE THE RESPONSIBILITY CHART

The Responsibility Chart helps children practice ownership: knowing the job, starting on time, finishing all steps, owning attitude, and helping the home team.

### HOW TO USE IT

Try these Responsibility Jobs:

- ✓ Make the bed
- ✓ Put things away
- ✓ Pack the bag
- ✓ Feed a pet
- ✓ Clean up after dinner
- ✓ Help with laundry



*Parent Script: "Let's make sure we both know what finished means."*

## 📅 3. BUILD A WEEKLY GOAL ROUTINE

### MONDAY



Choose the goal.

### TUESDAY



Take one small step.

### WEDNESDAY



Check focus.

### THURSDAY



Ask for help.

### FRIDAY



Notice progress.

### WEEKEND



Reset and celebrate effort.



## 4. REWARDS CAN HELP, BUT THEY ARE NOT THE WHOLE GOAL

Simple family-time rewards are great! They give kids extra motivation. But the bigger goal is building strong habits that last.

Try these reward ideas:

- ★ Pick a family game
- ★ Extra bedtime story
- ★ Special time with Mom or Dad
- ★ Park or playground
- ★ Choose dinner



*Parent Script: "The reward is fun, but the real win is that you followed through."*

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# Using the Goal Worksheets and Related Resources

Simple tools to help kids set goals, build habits, and stay on track at home.



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## ★ USE THIS GUIDE WITH: ★

### 1. GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET FOR KIDS

**Goal Setting Worksheet for Kids**  
A simple guide to help kids choose a goal, make a plan, and keep going.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

**1 MY GOAL**  
This week, I want to work toward this goal: \_\_\_\_\_  
My goal is about:  
 Martial arts  Friendship  
 School  Confidence  
 Home  Responsibility  
 Sports or activities  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2 GOAL SETTING MEANS I CAN...**  
1 Choose one clear goal I can do one thing to work on instead of trying to do everything at once.  
2 Make a plan I can break my goal into small steps.  
3 Take action I can practice, try, and do my part.  
4 Ask for help I can talk to a parent, teacher, coach, or instructor when I need support.  
5 Keep going I can keep trying even when my goal feels hard.

**3 MY GOAL LADDER — I CAN DO THIS!** Start at the bottom and climb one step at a time.  
My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_  
Why this goal matters to me: \_\_\_\_\_  
Step 1: First, I will, \_\_\_\_\_  
Step 2: Next, I will, \_\_\_\_\_  
Step 3: Then, I will, \_\_\_\_\_  
Finish Line: I will know I reached my goal when, \_\_\_\_\_

**4 WHAT MIGHT GET IN MY WAY?** Sometimes goals feel hard. That does not mean I should quit.  
Something that might get in my way is:  
 I might forget  I might need help  
 I might not be motivated  I might not know what to do next  
 I might feel nervous  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
If that happens, I can:  
 Take a deep breath  Practice a little more  
 Ask for help  Remember why my goal matters  
 Try again  Say, "This I can."

**5 PARENT TIP**  
Goal setting is most powerful when kids learn to focus on effort, progress, and follow-through.  
Instead of only asking, "Did you reach your goal?" try asking:  
• "What step did you take today?"  
• "What did you learn?"  
• "What helped you keep going?"  
• "What are you proud of?"  
• "What do you want next?"  
Praise the process, not just the finish line.

This worksheet helps kids choose a goal, decide why it matters, break the goal into steps, identify obstacles, and choose what to do when something feels hard.



#### HELPS CHILDREN:

- ✓ Choose one clear goal
- ✓ Decide why it matters
- ✓ Break the goal into steps
- ✓ Identify obstacles
- ✓ Choose what to do when something feels hard

### 2. GOAL PROGRESS TRACKER FOR KIDS

**Goal Progress Tracker for Kids**  
A simple way to track progress, stay motivated, and keep going toward your goal.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

**1 MY GOAL THIS WEEK**  
My goal is: \_\_\_\_\_  
This goal is about:  
 Martial arts  Chess  
 Home  Friendship  
 Confidence  Responsibility  
Why it matters: \_\_\_\_\_

**2 PROGRESS MEANS I CAN...**  
1 Remember my goal I keep my goal in mind each day.  
2 Take one small step I work on one part at a time.  
3 Keep trying I do not quit when it feels hard.  
4 Ask for help I talk to a parent, teacher, or coach when I need support.  
5 Notice progress I celebrate effort and improvement.

**3 MY GOAL PROGRESS TRACKER — I CAN DO THIS!** Track your effort and progress each day!  

| Day       | Worked on My Goal | Took a Small Step | Kept Going | Asked for Help | I'm Proud Because |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Monday    | ☆☆                | ☆☆                | ☆☆         | ☆☆             |                   |
| Tuesday   | ☆☆                | ☆☆                | ☆☆         | ☆☆             |                   |
| Wednesday | ☆☆                | ☆☆                | ☆☆         | ☆☆             |                   |
| Thursday  | ☆☆                | ☆☆                | ☆☆         | ☆☆             |                   |
| Friday    | ☆☆                | ☆☆                | ☆☆         | ☆☆             |                   |
| Saturday  | ☆☆                | ☆☆                | ☆☆         | ☆☆             |                   |
| Sunday    | ☆☆                | ☆☆                | ☆☆         | ☆☆             |                   |

**4 MY PROGRESS CHECK-IN**  
One step I took this week: \_\_\_\_\_  
Something that felt hard: \_\_\_\_\_  
Something I am proud of: \_\_\_\_\_  
My next step is: \_\_\_\_\_

**5 PARENT TIP**  
• Praise progress, not perfection.  
• Ask about the step your child took today.  
• Help kids notice effort, growth, and follow-through.  
• Celebrate small wins along the way.

This tracker helps kids remember their goal, take one small step, keep trying, ask for help, notice progress, write what they are proud of, and plan their next step.



#### HELPS CHILDREN:

- ✓ Remember the goal
- ✓ Take one small step
- ✓ Keep trying
- ✓ Ask for help
- ✓ Notice progress
- ✓ Write what they are proud of
- ✓ Plan the next step

## ★ RELATED HORIZON PARENT RESOURCES ★

### 3. KIDS FOCUS CHART

**Kids Focus Chart**  
A simple at-home tool to build better focus, effort, and follow-through.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

**1 MY FOCUS MISSION**  
This week, I will focus on:  
 Homework  Chores  
 Reading  Bedtime routine  
 Morning routine  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2 FOCUS MEANS I CAN...**  
1 Get my things ready I know a good amount of what I need to do.  
2 Use my time wisely I begin a few minutes before my goal starts.  
3 Stay on the first time I begin right away without getting distracted.  
4 Stay with the task I keep practicing and don't give up.  
5 Finish strong I check my work and do my best all the time.

**3 MY FOCUS CHART — I CAN DO THIS!** Circle a star each day you show focus!  

| Day       | Ready to Start | Used My Time | Stayed on Task | Finished Strong | Parent Praise |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Monday    | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Tuesday   | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Wednesday | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Thursday  | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Friday    | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Saturday  | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Sunday    | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |

**4 WHEN I EARN I CAN CHOOSE:** STARS.  
 Pick a family game  Special time with Mom/Dad  
 Choose dinner  Park/playground trip  
 Extra bedtime story  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**5 PARENT TIP**  
• Keep the goal simple.  
• Praise effort.  
• Use the chart to build habits, not punish mistakes.



Helps with attention, starting, staying with the task, and finishing strong.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITY CHART FOR KIDS

**Responsibility Chart for Kids**  
A simple weekly chart to build discipline, independence, and follow-through at home.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

**1 MY FOCUS MISSIONS**  
This week, I will focus on:  
 Homework only  Putting things away  
 Helping clean up  Feeding a pet  
 Packing my bag  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Why not me routine: \_\_\_\_\_

**2 RESPONSIBILITY MEANS I CAN...**  
1 Know my job I understand what needs to be done.  
2 Start on time I begin when it is time.  
3 Finish all steps I complete the whole job, not just part of it.  
4 Own my attitude I try even when I do not feel like it.  
5 Help my home team I help my parents because my family matters.

**3 MY RESPONSIBILITY CHART — I CAN DO THIS!** Circle a star each day you follow through!  

| Day       | Ready to Start | Used My Time | Stayed on Task | Finished Strong | Parent Praise |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Monday    | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Tuesday   | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Wednesday | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Thursday  | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Friday    | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Saturday  | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |
| Sunday    | ☆☆             | ☆☆           | ☆☆             | ☆☆              |               |

**4 MY RESPONSIBILITY PLAN**  
My main job this week is: \_\_\_\_\_  
I will do it:  Morning  After school  Before bed  
When I finish, I will check in and reset for tomorrow.

**5 PARENT TIP**  
• Start with one clear job, not a long list.  
• Show what "finished" looks like.  
• Praise follow-through and attitude, not perfection.



Helps with ownership, routines, independence, completing steps, attitude, and helping the family team.



### HORIZON CONNECTION

At Horizon ATA, students practice goal setting whenever they work toward a new skill, stripe, belt, or personal challenge. Confidence grows when they keep showing up.

Want your child to practice goal-setting, focus, discipline, and responsibility in a positive environment? Learn more about the New Student Experience at Horizon ATA Martial Arts.



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