

# Tips for Teachers

## Helping your Learners Set Goals

Being goal-oriented is a critical part of how people become self-directed as they grow from children to adults.

### WHY?

- People who set goals are more **successful** in life.
- Goal setting is linked to greater **achievement, self-confidence, motivation, and autonomy.**
- Setting goals is the first step in developing **self-determination skills.**



**Goal-setting theory** assumes that people are most motivated when they set their own goals, rather than goals imposed by others. Difficult, yet attainable, goals help people direct their attention, be persistent, make choices, solve problems, and advocate on their own behalf.

### HOW?

Being goal-oriented is a critical part of how children learn to be resourceful and independent. This is particularly important for children with disabilities who may be at risk for “learned helplessness” when the adults around them want to provide supports to “help” them in school.

From young children or young adults, the first steps are

- **Self-assessment and**
- **Selecting and defining a goal.**

In future Tip Sheets, we will share how to:

- Analyze barriers, potential solutions, and supports;
- Make a commitment to action steps;
- Monitor progress, and
- Reflect in order to refine or replace the goal.



## SELF ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES

### Satisfaction Assessment

Place an X in the box for each column that best represents how you feel.

VERY happy/satisfied				
I'm OK!				
Things could be better				
NOT happy/satisfied				
	School Work	Family Involvement	Friends Relationships	Personal Interests

### Interests and Strengths

Elementary students can draw pictures; secondary students can write words, phrases, or sentences.

THINGS, PEOPLE, ACTIVITIES		MY STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES	
I LIKE:	I DON'T LIKE:	I AM GOOD AT:	I'D LIKE TO DEVELOP:

## DEFINE GOALS



#### SPECIFIC

State what you will achieve by using action words and defining the conditions for achievement.



#### MEASUREABLE

The target goal can be measured in terms of how much, how many, how frequently it occurs. It is the way to evaluate success.



#### ACHIEVABLE

Goals are realistic and attainable. This leads to the next important question: how will it be accomplished?



#### RELEVANT

This goal is important within the school, home, or community with peers or important adults and is directly related to the self-assessment.



#### TIME-BOUND

Goals have time frames and target dates for achievement.

#### RESOURCES:

- [Youth on the Move](#)
- [A goal-tracker calendar from Understood](#)
- [National Gateway to Self-Determination](#)

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream”

C. S. Lewis

