MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENT NEWSLETTER

TIPS, IDEAS, AND ADVICE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

Here are some questions to ask your student this month.

▶ What is one thing you accomplished last year that you are proud of?

▶ What is something you would like to accomplish this year?

▶ What are some steps you can take to meet this goal?

▶ How can we (your parents) help?

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GOALS

The beginning of a new year is the perfect time to set new goals. Setting goals will help your child understand your expectations, and give them something positive to work toward.

Encourage your child to set goals that are specific, measurable, and realistic. Here are some examples of each.

▶ **Not specific:** I will read more books for pleasure.

▶ **Specific:** I will read one new book every month.

▶ **Not measurable:** I will spend less time on my phone.

▶ **Measurable:** I will only spend 30 minutes at a time on my phone instead of one hour.

▶ **Not realistic:** I usually get a C in language arts, but this semester I will get an A.

▶ **Realistic:** I usually get a C in language arts, but this semester I'm going to get a B.

Encourage your child to set one academic goal and one personal goal for the second half of the school year. For example, the academic goal could be to use a planner every day, or aiming to have all homework done by 9:00 pm.

Finally, work with your child to track their progress. For example, at the end of each week or month, you might talk about how your child's personal goals are coming. At the end of each quarter, go through your child's report card and discuss their academic progress—and whether your child achieved their academic goals.

MEETING PARENTING AND FAMILY GOALS

The new year can also be a good time for *you* to set some new personal, parenting, and family goals, and to think about the changes you would like to make.

Identify what you want to change. Perhaps you want your family to have a healthier diet, or to spend more quality time together.

Think about what you can do to achieve these goals and start making small changes now. For example, if your goal is to help your family improve their diet, do the weekly grocery shopping together, and let them help you plan the weekly menu.

Involve and empower your child. Talk to your child about what you want to improve and why. Go over your plan with them and ask for their suggestions. If your child is involved in the plan, they are more likely to be on board with and supportive of the changes you're making.

CHARACTER MATTERS: ADAPTABILITY

Young students sometimes have trouble being adaptable—which is the ability to deal with uncertainty or change. Remind your child that things don't always go the way we expect them to, and explain how this can be a good thing because it can lead to personal growth. Share times that you've had to adapt to new circumstances or deal with change.

Being adaptable can be especially helpful when working toward a specific goal. The path to achieving a goal is never a linear one, and there are often roadblocks along the way. When a child is adaptable, they can deal effectively with these roadblocks, rather than allowing their progress to stop completely.

SHORT- AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Encourage your child to make both short-term goals (goals that can be achieved in a few hours or days) and long-term goals (goals that will take weeks or months to achieve). Talk about how short-term goals can help them achieve long-term goals.

FAMILY FUN: TRY SOMETHING NEW

Does your family always play the same games, eat the same foods, or do the same physical activities together? Make it a goal to try something new this year!

► Find a park you've never been to. Look up the hiking trails online and choose a challenging one to try.

► As a family, work on a puzzle with a high piece count or level of difficulty. When you finish it, reward yourselves with ice cream.

► Find a dish your family has never tried. Look up a recipe online, shop for the ingredients, and prepare it together.