

# Setting Goals and Making Changes

*Everybody knows that bad habits are hard to break and good habits are equally hard to make. Developing any new skill takes time, practice, and encouragement.*

Students in your child's class are learning about setting goals about respectful behavior. They are creating goal-setting plans and learning to celebrate successes and cope with setbacks. Parents can help by reinforcing these *Steps to Respect* activities. Below is a sample plan to try at home. (Keep in mind that this goal-setting process can be used for a variety of other things, including study skills and family goals.)

1. Sit down with your child and ask him to think of respectful behaviors he might like to work on. Have him select one behavior and state a simple goal for using it. For example: "I want to say 'please' and 'thank you' more often."
2. Set a time frame for working on the goal. A week is a good time frame for practicing a behavior, but your child will need to understand that many goals cannot be reached in a week.
3. Together, think of ways to practice the selected behavior.
4. Make a simple chart for the refrigerator to track progress. Your child can look at it each day and check off how many times she practiced her goal behavior.
5. Encourage your child during his practice period. Compliments will help reinforce his commitment. Modeling the behavior yourself will also help.
6. Reassure your child when she experiences a setback. Let her know that setbacks are normal during the change process. Talk about ways for her to get back on track.
7. At the end of the time frame, talk with your child about how it went. Did it get easier to practice the behavior? Was his goal a good one? How did others react to the new behavior? How successful does he feel about reaching his goal?

It has been said that every long journey begins with one small step. All journeys begin with a goal, and many small steps lead to the achievement of that goal. Thank you for continuing to support the *Steps to Respect* program and our goal of creating a safe, respectful school environment.