

GOAL SETTING

GOAL

Learn the process for setting goals effectively.

BACKGROUND

Goals are an important part of any successful ABA program. Goals give direction as well as a destination. They allow you to note progress or recognize a need for change. Laurence J. Peters said it best:

If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else.

Choose Goals That Are Meaningful For Your Child

When choosing goals for your child, consider what your child's needs are and will be as she grows. Start with broad goals and break them down to something more specific that you can teach.

What behaviors prevent her from being independent? What behaviors prevent her from being part of her community? Which behaviors present a risk of harm to herself or others?

What would her life look like if she could self-advocate and communicate effectively?

What skills does she need to be more independent?

GETTING STARTED

Turn your ideas into goals

Setting goals sets your ABA program up for success. You probably already have an idea about things you want to work on or learn about, but take it one step further by turning these ideas into real goals.

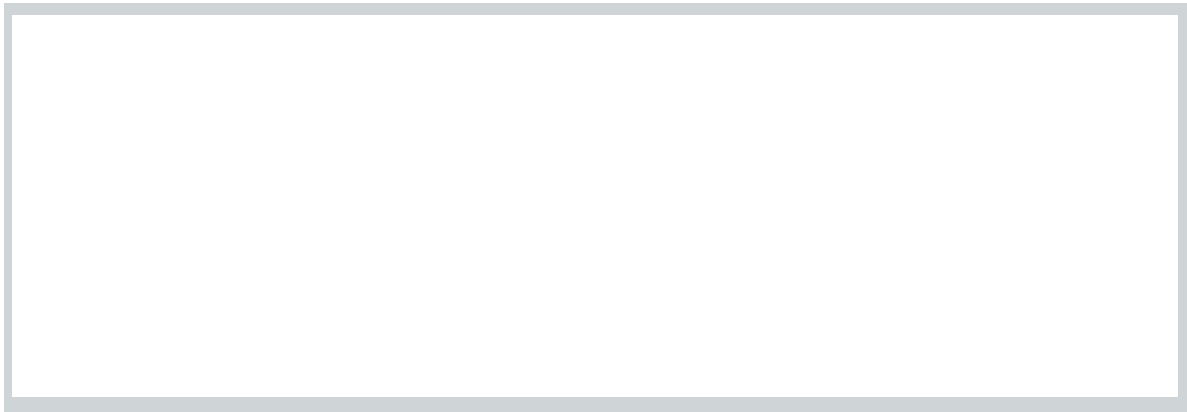
At a minimum, develop goals for your child in the areas of:

- Behavior reduction
- Skill acquisition

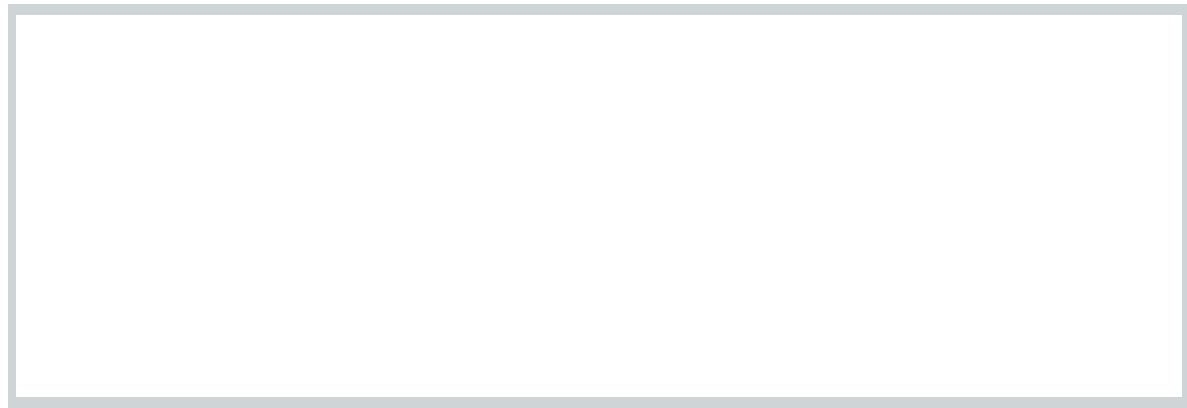
You might also consider setting specific goals for yourself to ensure that you stay on track with tasks you need to accomplish. These might include areas such as:

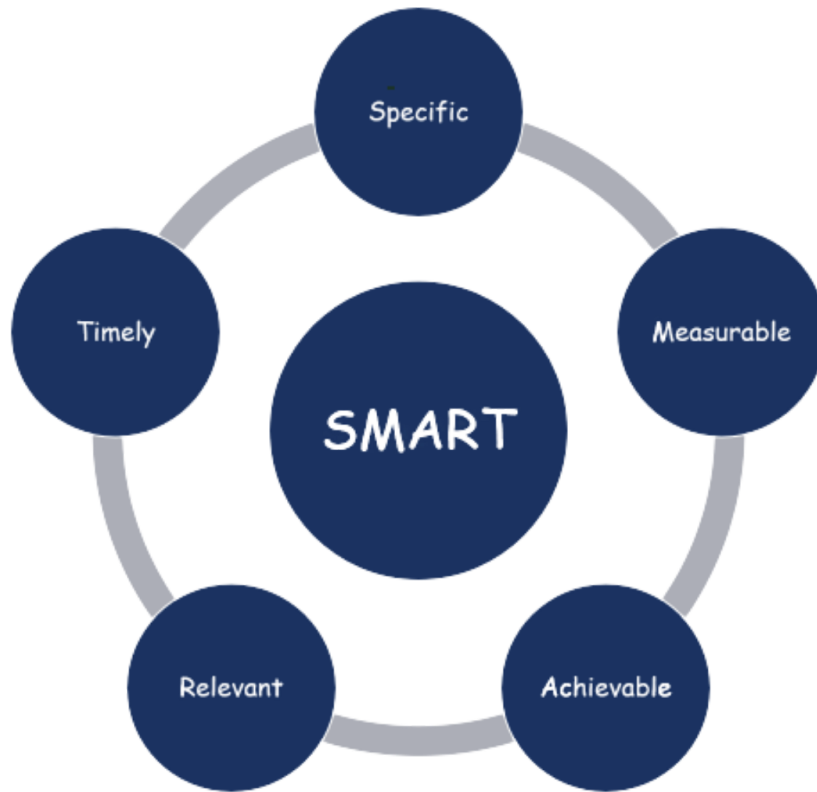
- Follow through
- Attendance or participation
- Data collection
- Implementation
- Skill acquisition

WHAT GOALS DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR CHILD?



WHAT GOALS DO YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELF?





MAKE YOUR GOALS SMART

There are many strategies available for defining goals. The SMART technique is a framework that is easy to understand, and incorporates key elements of successful goals. SMART stands for:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Timely

NOTES:

SPECIFIC

The goal must be clear and limited in scope. It should answer What, Why and How type questions.

MEASURABLE

It has to be quantifiable. You need to be able to tell without a doubt whether you or your child achieved the goal. Define some quantifiable aspect of the behavior that allows you to count it in some way.

ACHIEVABLE

The goal should stretch your child's ability so that he feels challenged, but should not be so difficult that either you or he becomes frustrated.

RELEVANT

The goal has to be something relevant to your child. Although many ABA programs use standardized assessments such as the VB-MAPP or the ABBLS-R, the goal must impact your child's everyday life experiences.

TIMELY

The goal should have a time frame associated with it. There should be some sense of urgency, but provide a reasonable timeframe. This will allow you to evaluate progress toward your goal, and provides opportunities to make adjustments. The timeframe should be reasonable based on the goal.

A grayscale photograph of a woman on the left, smiling and clapping her hands. In the background on the right, a young girl is visible, looking towards the woman. The image has a soft, faded appearance. A semi-transparent gray box is centered over the image, containing text.

GET INVOLVED

A successful ABA program relies heavily on the parents' and caregivers' ability to learn and utilize the strategies used during session. This helps with generalization and dramatically improves outcomes. No one expects you to become a therapist, and most of the strategies provide just a slightly different way of getting through your day. These small changes lead to massive gains for your child.

Images are of models for demonstration purposes and do not depict children with autism.