



The key to turning a resolution into an attainable goal is to be honest, be realistic, and set a measurable standard.

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## Real resolutions

### Make the most of New Year's resolutions

Every ending is the start of something new, and never is that more apparent than during the weeks approaching the New Year. An ending means moving on - taking with you the best of one place and time and leaving behind the rest. A new beginning offers opportunity and promise, coupled with some uncertainty.

Make the most of this New Year by making a few resolutions that really mean something to your whole family. Think back over the past year. You'll remember great moments with your kids and other not-so-great moments - every

parent has them. Resolve to put more of the good stuff in your relationship by reducing the issues that trigger the not-so-great moments.

The challenge with most New Year's resolutions is that they are vague promises: work out more, eat healthier, lose weight, spend money more wisely. The key to turning a resolution into an attainable goal is to be honest, be realistic and set a measurable standard.

### What parents can do

- Think of one consistent source of conflict between you and your child. It may be temper tantrums, picky eating habits, back talk or something else entirely. Resolve to find one parent workshop or class that deals with that issue, sign up to attend - many are free. You'll learn and adopt new tactics for dealing with the issue, minimize the conflict and create more time for the "good stuff."
- How often have you heard your child say, "Mom, that's not what I meant!" Listen more carefully to what your children are saying. Practice repeating to your child what they have just said to you. By repeating what they say, followed by a question like, "Do I understand what you just said?" will go miles in clarifying your communication and reducing conflict.
- Do you often feel rushed and stressed out, like you're pulled in too many directions? Resolve to play more by scheduling frequent play times with your kids. With younger kids, pull out the toys and games and really, honestly play. With older children, experience something new and fun together. The act of playing will release your stress, and doing it with your kids will strengthen your relationship.
- When was the last time you ate together as a family? Consider your family's lifestyle and designate family dinnertime as often as is realistic. Try for at least once a week, but if that isn't possible for you, make it once a month. Make it a priority to be together for a meal.