

Parenting for Success Class #6

Setting Goals



Introduction

Charts and Contracts

Is there ever a situation in a family when parents and children both get what they want? You bet there is!

Charts and contracts are a great way to ensure that both parents and children are getting what they want. Charts and contracts are an agreement between parents and their children that involve the parents making certain benefits available when their children do certain other things. Charts and contracts are concrete, visible reminders of this agreement and can help motivate children to engage in positive activities, complete chores, or learn new skills.

In short, these methods assist parents in helping their children set and reach reasonable goals.



Everyone has Goals

Parents naturally have certain goals for their children. Often these goals have to do with managing their children's behavior, but they may also include helping their children learn new skills or offering encouragement to reach goals their children have set for themselves.

Of course, children also have goals. They may include new toys, special activities, allowance, more freedom, etc.



Everyone has Goals

Using charts and contracts can be a great way to help both you and your child attain your goals.

Contracts

- A contract is a written statement of what your child agrees to do and what the consequences are if he or she accomplishes that goal.

Charts

- A chart is a contract that uses pictures to illustrate and keep track of an agreement between you and your child.



Benefits

Effective use of charts and contracts allows for:

- **More opportunity for success**—charts and contracts outline attainable goals. Instead of overwhelming children with a large expectation that may be abstract and intimidating, these tools allow for incremental improvement and growth, with positive reinforcement at milestones along the way.
- **Improved self-esteem**—charts and contracts provide an easy and immediate way for children to monitor their own progress. When children can clearly see their improvement over time, they feel better about themselves and their abilities. Goals tend to seem more attainable.
- **Better communication between parents and children**—charts and contracts are tangible agreements that clearly outline both parents' and children's expectations. It is very easy to track whether both parties have lived up to their end of the agreement, so conflicts tend to be reduced.



When to Use

Use charts and contracts...

- When you want to focus on a particular problem behavior.
- When your children have a personal goal they would like to achieve.
- When you have a particular goal you would like your child to achieve.



Writing Contracts

- Identify goals, both your goals and your child's
- Write what you want your child to do
- Write what your child wants to do
- Set a time limit
- Sign and date the contract



Writing Contracts

Example

Here is an example of how this might work with a 15 year old youth who wants a later curfew and whose parents want her to come home on time.

- First identify goals: The parents' goal is to have their daughter come home on time; the daughter's goal is to have more freedom by having a later curfew.
- Second write down the agreement: Sally agrees to be home by 9:00 pm Sunday through Thursday and by 10:00 pm on Friday and Saturday for two weeks in a row. In return, Sally can have an extended curfew (until 10:30 pm) on Friday and Saturday nights. Notice that the time limit is included in this agreement.
- Sign and date the contract.



Developing Charts

- Identify goals, both your goals and your child's
- Set a time limit
- Draw/create a chart

Developing Charts

Example

Here is an example of how a chart can help with a younger child. In this example, we will be working with a six year old girl.

- Megan was struggling with getting ready for school in the morning. This created problems for the entire family. To help fix things, Megan's parents created a chart to help her keep track of the tasks she needed to complete and to motivate her with rewards.
- Megan earned a star for each of the tasks she completed. She was able to earn extra privileges according to the number of stars that she had on her chart each day. The chart has three lists of privileges she can earn.



Hints for Success

- State the goal positively. Use “when” instead of “if.”
- Follow through on the agreement.
- Make the goals specific and measurable.
- Keep the goals reasonable.
- Provide the consequence.
- Make it fun.



Conclusion

Charts and contracts are a great way for parents to motivate their children while also teaching their expectations at the same time. Charts are more effective with younger children, while contracts are more effective with teenagers.



Next Class

Now that we understand how to set family rules and help our children reach their goals, class #7 will look at how parents can further manage their children's behaviors through Preventive Teaching.

Thank you!

We hope this class was useful to you.

For more free parenting resources, including additional classes in this series, please visit:

www.youthvillage.org

