



## 8 Parenting Goals to Start the New Year Strong

Helping to make your family safer, stronger and more harmonious may not require a complete overhaul, but rather a few strategic tweaks.

**Here are some concrete and tangible parenting goals you can set for the year ahead.** *(Kids can have fun setting goals, too! See [Healthy New Year's Resolutions for Children and Teens](#). (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Healthy-New-Years-Resolutions-for-Kids.aspx))*



- 1. Get everyone up-to-date on recommended immunizations.** Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself, your children, and other loved ones from dangerous viruses such as flu and COVID (/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/How-is-the-Flu-Different-From-COVID-19.aspx) spiking among children. Call your pediatrician to make sure your children are up-to-date on all recommended immunizations (/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Recommended-Immunization-Schedules.aspx), and ask any questions you may have. And remind your kids that good hand hygiene (/English/health-issues/conditions/prevention/Pages/Hand-Washing-A-Powerful-Antidote-to-Illness.aspx) habits will help prevent the spread of germs.
- 2. Do good digital.** What are your kids watching on TV and online? Devote some time to researching age-appropriate media (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/TV-Ratings-A-Guide-for-Parents.aspx). Make a family media use plan (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx), and try to prevent gaming (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Unhealthy-Video-Gaming.aspx) from becoming an unhealthy habit. Remember that screen time shouldn't always be alone time. Watch a show together. Play a video game together. Understand what they are doing and be a part of it.
- 3. Read together.** Set aside some time for reading (/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/school/Pages/10-Tips-to-Help-Your-Child-Fall-in-Love-with-Reading.aspx) each day. For younger kids, an easy way is to build it into your child's bedtime routine (/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/Brush-Book-Bed.aspx). For older children and teens, share a favorite book by taking turns reading aloud or listen to audiobooks together. Reading has so many brain-boosting benefits (/English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/The-Secret-to-a-Smarter-Baby.aspx) for kids. Reading together also strengthens that special bond between you and your child.
- 4. Get outside more.** Spending time outdoors (/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Getting-Children-and-Teens-Outside-While-Social-Distancing.aspx) can be a great mood booster (/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Mood-Boosting-Tips-for-Families-COVID-19.aspx), and help families get needed physical activity (/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Making-Fitness-a-Way-of-Life.aspx) and vitamin D (/English/ages-stages/teen/nutrition/Pages/Vitamin-D-and-Sun-Exposure.aspx) while enjoying time in nature. Spending time outside also give your child's eyes (/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/Pages/What-Too-Much-Screen-Time-Does-to-Your-Childs-Eyes.aspx) a healthy screen-time break (/English/health-issues/conditions/eyes/Pages/What-Too-Much-Screen-Time-Does-to-Your-Childs-Eyes.aspx). It may also help them sleep (/English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Sleep-and-Mental-Health.aspx) better at night.
- 5. Keep kids riding rear-facing (/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Rear-Facing-Car-Seats-for-Infants-Toddlers.aspx) as long as possible,** up to the limits of their car seat. This will include virtually all children under 2 and most children up to age 4. If you are past the car-seat (/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx) stage of parenting, congrats! If you're still in the thick of it, check for any new car seat laws that may be going into effect in your state in the new year. Remind anyone who transports your child by car.

6. **Set aside time to cook as a family.** Many families enjoy baking treats together during the holidays. Keep the fun going in the new year. Set aside special times to cook together as a family (</English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Cooking-With-Your-Children.aspx>). If your child is a picky eater (</English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/How-Do-I-Help-My-Picky-Eater-Try-More-Foods.aspx>), this can get them more interested in trying new, healthy foods. [Back to Top](#)
7. **Make a family disaster kit.** It's scary to think how disasters like wildfires (</English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/climate-change-has-sparked-more-wildfires-why-kids-are-most-at-risk.aspx>), hurricanes (</English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/responding-to-childrens-emotional-needs-during-times-of-crisis.aspx>) or tornados could affect our communities. Being ready is one way to be less afraid. With your children, assemble basic supplies (</English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Family-Disaster-Supplies-List.aspx>) you will need if a disaster strikes. Read here (</English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Getting-Your-Family-Disaster-Ready.aspx>) for some useful items to pack.
8. **Mind mental health (</English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/How-to-Talk-with-Your-Child-and-Their-Pediatrician-About-Mental-Health-Concerns.aspx>) & practice self-care (</English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Finding-a-Self-Care-Ritual-That-Works-for-You.aspx>).** When was the last time you had a check-up? Go proper rest (</English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/Sleep-and-Mental-Health.aspx>)? Once a baby is no longer a part of your body, it's easy to forget that tight association between how you care for yourself and how you care for your child's health. We also know depression and anxiety (</English/ages-stages/prenatal/Pages/Depression-and-Anxiety-During-Pregnancy-and-After-Birth-FAQs.aspx>) can happen to both moms and dads during and after pregnancy (</English/ages-stages/prenatal/delivery-beyond/Pages/dads-can-get-postpartum-depression-too.aspx>). If this is you, you're not alone. Help is near. (</English/ages-stages/prenatal/delivery-beyond/Pages/Understanding-Motherhood-and-Mood-Baby-Blues-and-Beyond.aspx>)

## More information

- Healthy New Year's Resolutions for Children & Teens (</English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Healthy-New-Years-Resolutions-for-Kids.aspx>)
- Making Physical Activity a Way of Life (</English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Making-Fitness-a-Way-of-Life.aspx>)
- 10 Tips to Help Your Child Fall in Love with Reading (</English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/Kindness-https%3a/www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/school/Pages/10-Tips-to-Help-Your-Child-Fall-in-Love-with-Reading.aspxCan-Make-a-Big-Difference.aspx>)
- AAP Family Media Plan (</english/fmp/pages/mediaplan.aspx>)
- Healthy Sleep Habits: How Many Hours Does Your Child Need? (</English/healthy-living/sleep/Pages/healthy-sleep-habits-how-many-hours-does-your-child-need.aspx>)

**Last Updated** 1/6/2023

**Source** American Academy of Pediatrics (Copyright © 2022)

The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.