

# Goal Setting Facilitator Guide



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# Introduction

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Welcome to the ***Goal Setting Facilitator Guide***. This guide is intended to support experienced instructors and facilitators as well as those who are new to these roles. All programs are different. Each program will facilitate the goal setting process in the context of a unique community.

This guide provides useful strategies, tips, and ready-to-print activities that will help you present goal setting to adult learners. These activities are intended to be interactive and visually engaging. You may want to modify them as you engage the learners in your classroom.

Goal setting is vital to the success of families. Through goal setting and achievement, individuals reach new milestones in the journey toward their full potential. As you work with families, the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) can be a great resource for any questions or concerns you may have.

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# Section 1: Explore Goal Setting

Scenario 1: How Do We Move From Striving to Thriving

**Background Information**

What Is Goal Setting?

Why Is Goal Setting Important With Adult Learners?

How Do I Support Learners?

How to Guide Learners Through an Inquiry Process

How to Explore Goals

**Activity: Create a Vision Board**

**Activity: Use a Graphic Organizer**

# Section 1: Explore Goal Setting

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## Scenario 1: How Do We Move From Striving to Thriving?

At the Americana Community Center in Louisville, Kentucky, goal setting was viewed as an opportunity to accompany English language learners from striving to thriving. This took into consideration the multiple areas of their lives. Through facilitated goal setting, learners directed their own educational, emotional, physical, relational, and financial growth. Americana staff worked to build confidence and equip learners with skills to be successful in taking risks towards achieving their goals. This was done in a learning environment that provided safety and support as learners faced growth-producing challenges.

With students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds all in the same learning environment, it was important for the facilitator to create goal setting activities that were individualized and could be built upon together as a class. Through self-reflection and group sharing, parents engaged with each other's ideas, life experiences, and creativity. Providing the time for students to share their own ideas with each other was a great way to help them think outside of the box.

From the initial interaction with learners, facilitators built unique and meaningful relationships with each parent. This supported parents in stepping out of their comfort zones toward the goals they defined for themselves and for their families. This trust was necessary before leading learners through goal setting activities. Facilitators asked questions and parents shared their stories with each other. What the student chose to share was valued by the facilitator as important information needed to guide the entire process.

One activity used in the parenting class was creating "Dream Boards." To complete this activity, facilitators provided magazines, scissors, glue, and blank poster paper for parents to use to cut out pictures from magazines of things that represented what they desired in their lives. Another activity used was "3 Stars and 1 Wish." Parents brainstormed three "stars" in their lives and one "wish." These "stars" signified parts of themselves they liked or areas that made them happy. It was beneficial for individuals to identify their "3 stars" and share them out loud. This strengthened their ownership of each attribute. After discussing their "stars," parents returned to their "wish." The stories voluntarily shared allowed classmates to give affirmation and encouragement to one another.

As the facilitator, it is important to set a safe and supportive learning atmosphere and to intentionally build relationships and trust. When working through various goal-setting lessons, always remember to teach by encouragement. The most successful lessons happen when learners gain confidence after recognizing their own strengths and acquiring the necessary tools to achieve their goals. This empowers individuals and entire communities.





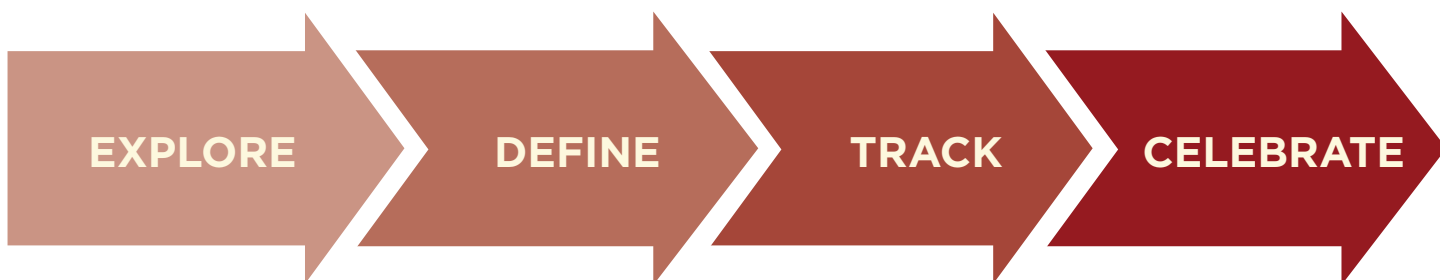
*Americana Community Center, Louisville, Kentucky*

## Background Information

### What Is Goal Setting?

A goal is what we want to achieve. Goals help us focus on a change that we would like to make. Goals help us plan and make progress. Goal setting is an interactive, ongoing, and cooperative process involving learners and facilitators. It is essential to adult education programs.

Learners and facilitators can explore, define, track, and celebrate achieving goals. These are the steps of the inquiry process.



During these steps, challenges are addressed and successes are celebrated. This process is learner-centered and considers the intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) motivators that drive adults to set and achieve personal goals. In doing so, adults grow as role models and educators of their families.

Learners come to adult education and family literacy programs with varied interests and needs. It is important to honor the diversity of the learners' interests and the wealth of their life experiences throughout this process of inquiry. Goal setting can drive instruction as you seek out community resources and plan lessons that support the goals that learners set.



## Why Is Goal Setting Important With Adult Learners?

Goal setting is foundational to adult education. It affirms the wealth of experience and potential of each learner. It provides learners with adequate supports and relevant classroom activities. It promotes growth as learners develop their self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-efficacy. Each person who walks into the adult education classroom can participate and achieve. Through completing their goals each learner will have cause to celebrate.

Affirming the experience and of each learner and providing adequate classroom supports and activities is informed by Malcolm Knowles' concept of adult learners (Knowles, 1980). Adult learners want to

- **Feel autonomous; they want to direct their studies.**
- **Feel respected for their varied life experiences.**
- **Ask meaningful questions about the world and to receive answers.**
- **Know how learning something new will apply to their lives.**
- **Apply this knowledge to solving problems.**
- **Be actively engaged.**

Integrating goal setting as a regular and central part of adult education classrooms provides an opportunity to orient your adult learners to goal setting.

- **Authentic goal setting encourages learners to set the path to achieve those goals and the studies that will get them there.**
- **Thoughtful goal setting respects learners and their experiences, especially when exploring potential or unstated goals.**
- **Reflective goal setting facilitates meaningful questions and truthful answers that assist learners as they define their goals.**
- **Useful goal setting applies gained knowledge and skills to monitoring progress toward goals.**
- **Effective goal setting engages learners actively, supporting them on toward the next objective or goal, and then celebrating successes together.**

*This builds a sense of “where have I been,”  
“where am I now,” and “where do I want be?”*

Furthermore, goal setting and goal achievement promote self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-efficacy. Self-awareness says, *“This is who I am.”* Self-confidence says, *“I feel good about who I am.”* Self-efficacy says, *“I believe I can do this.”*

Through exploring stated and unstated goals, learners reflect on their life experiences and become more self-aware of the past, present, and future. Through defining goals and progressing toward their completion, learners build a sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy. For this reason, it is essential to celebrate all successes, small and big. All successes are wins for learners in your classroom.

## How Do I Support Learners? Intrinsic v. Extrinsic Motivation

The classroom is a place where learners evaluate their aspirations and make them a reality through setting and achieving goals (Merriam and Bierema, 2014). Motivation is key. The optimal goal-setting environment focuses on learner strengths and promotes intrinsic, or internal, motivation. This comes from within. It is based on inspiration, curiosity, and a challenge where learners feel confident to meet their goals. Extrinsic, or external, motivators are based on external factors such as money or a new job.

Knowles (1980) argues that internal motivators are more powerful than external motivators. We begin to understand if learners are more intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to complete their goal by identifying the roots of their motivations. Extrinsic motivators are an important to the goal-setting process. However, learners will be more likely to persist in meeting their goal if they are also intrinsically motivated.

### Facilitator Tips

1. Encourage learners to identify their extrinsic and intrinsic motivations.
2. Provide consistent support and feedback throughout the goal-setting process.

Sometimes, learners become unmotivated to reach their goals. Other times, motivation does not seem to be present (Deci and Ryan, 1985). In these cases, learners need extra encouragement to change their course of action or to seek additional support to complete a goal. Provide consistent support and feedback throughout the goal-setting process.

## Persistence

Learners' ability to persist depends on their current energy and the amount of energy they need to complete the task. The more energy learners have, the more likely they will persist in completing the task. McClusky's Theory of Margins (1970) acknowledges this difficulty in dealing with challenging life events.

For example, it is challenging to juggle earning a degree along with the many stressors and responsibilities that adults experience. For this reason, adults need support in persevering to reach the goals they have set. Think about the ways you can help your learners to have a healthy balance in life, so they may be able to persist through tedious situations or difficult life events. Engage learners regularly to ensure they have the support they need.

Create strategic partnerships in the community to find resources for learners. Provide resources based on the learners' needs. If learners can create a good work/life/school balance, then they are more likely to be successful in meeting their goals.

A study by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL, 2001) determined four key supports for persistence:

- awareness and management of the positive and negative forces that help and hinder persistence
- self-efficacy
- the establishment of a goal
- progress towards reaching a goal.

Addressing persistence, then, is no small task for facilitators or program staff. Facilitators and staff can plan programs of study that positively impact student persistence through understanding why students struggle to persist and the types of support available. Helping learners set goals and work toward reaching them are great supports we can offer!

***Reflect: How does my program encourage learners to have a healthy balance in life?***

## Resiliency

When people are resilient, they cope well with disruptive change. They overcome problems. They tend to remain healthy when experiencing stress. They change to new ways when the old ways are not working. Think back to when you learned to ride a bike, speak a new language, or write your first college essay. How did you feel? Were you comfortable and confident or apprehensive and self-conscious?

***Reflect: How does my classroom provide time for learners to plan for and learn from life's challenges?***

An inclusive, engaging, and positive learning environment helps learners thrive. This builds a community setting where they can overcome the various barriers they face. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) states that students will not open their minds to learning something new until they feel comfortable in their surroundings. He argues that learners' levels of motivation and stress directly impact their ability to learn. The higher the stress

levels, the less likely they are to learn. The higher the motivation level, the more likely they are to learn.

Facilitators can create an environment to help students increase their resiliency. George Lakey (2010) describes the classroom environment as a container. He explains that a "strong container has walls thick enough to hold a group doing the turbulent work with individuals willing to be vulnerable in order to learn" (p. 14). Adult learners need to feel safe and, therefore, need a "strong container to do their best work, to feel proud of themselves, and to experience their power" (p. 14). How, then, can you create and

maintain a strong container in which your students can do their best work? For example, mastering a new math or reading skill is the risk and the classroom environment is the safe place in which to take it. Create a thoughtful, supportive environment that invites learners to attempt new challenges. Support learners as they learn from these challenges. Using the strategies in the following chart is a great way to start.

To Build Resiliency, Work on:	Example
Staying calm under pressure	Practice stress-reducing strategies
Problem solving	Participate in Family Service Learning
Investing in my health	Exercise with friends/classmates
Valuing my feelings	Write reflectively
Expressing my feelings	Communicate feelings with facilitators and classmates
Increasing my desire to learn	Participate in a community event that interests me
Asking for support	Communicate needs with facilitators and classmates
Taking actions	Complete objectives that lead to achieving personal goals

# How to Guide Learners Through an Inquiry Process

Setting and monitoring goals is a process. Individuals need time to reflect on their needs, wants, and dreams (WVAE Professional Development Program, 2016). They need to establish priorities and figure out a starting point. You can guide learners through this process and provide support as learners target areas for improvement and set goals. Additionally, when goals are set, you will be there to help learners revisit them frequently to monitor progress and adjust.

When working with learners on goal setting, encourage them to set personal goals with program supports. These are student-centered goals that focus on the individual needs of learners and their families. Encourage and track student-centered goals even if the program does not provide direct support towards those goals. In this case, building community connections with other organizations, schools, and programs that can support your learners in these areas is essential.



From exploring goals to celebrating achievements, facilitators provide supports as learners drive the process. Actively engage learners at each step. This guide has been developed around each of these stages, and activities have been provided for each of the sections. Remember that these are suggested activities, and they are not the only activities that are possible. Use your creativity and knowledge of your learners and community to facilitate goal setting.

## How to Explore Goals

To help learners think about the goals they might set, it is helpful to begin with a process of inquiry. Inquiry allows facilitators and learners to ask questions. The focus is on exploring possibilities, so that learners can think about their needs, wants, and dreams. To help learners through an inquiry process, facilitators can use a variety of tools and strategies. Facilitators and learners can explore possibilities by asking questions, such as those listed below.

Reflective Questions to Discover Goals
What interests me about the program I participate in?
What do I want to learn more about?
What would I like to accomplish today?
What would I like to accomplish this week?
What would I like to accomplish this month?
What would I like to accomplish this year?

## Activity: Create a Vision Board

**Materials:** Vision Board Template and posterboard for each learner, magazines, newspapers, pictures, scissors, glue or tape, colored pencils, markers, pens/pencils

### Central Ideas and Practice:

1. Explain to learners what vision boards are.
  - a. They are boards that can be made digitally or with paper materials.
  - b. They give learners a space to show what is important in their vision of their future.
  - c. They may include pictures the learner draws, paints, or cuts out of magazines or other materials. For digital boards, learners collect pictures from digital sources that show their vision.
2. Show learners an example of a vision board. Ask, “Have you ever created something like this before? What did you include on your board?” If they have not done this, ask how they might decide what kind of pictures to include.
3. Explain that learners will create vision boards. These boards are a starting place for setting goals. A vision can be a helpful place to start. Specific goals will give structure to achieve pieces of that vision so we stay on track for the overall vision.
4. As a first step in creating the vision board, have learners complete the Vision Board Template (see next page). This handout will help learners consider what is important to them in the different areas of their lives. The template includes prompts for learners to consider different areas of their lives that may be a part of their vision for the future.
5. Provide time for learners to share their vision boards with a peer or the class before you display them. Explain that you will post learners’ vision boards in the classroom if they agree to this and if there is space for them. If it is not possible to post the boards in the classroom, ask learners to tell you where in their homes they will post their boards. Explain that it is important to post the vision board where it is visible. The boards will help remind the learners what they are working to achieve.
6. If the learners will create a digital vision board, provide digital resources as a starting place.



# Vision Board Template

**Community**

**Family**

**Health and Wellnes**

**Education**

**Work/Finances**

**Relationships**



## Activity: A Graphic Organizer for Goal Setting

**Materials:** copies of graphic organizers, pens/pencils

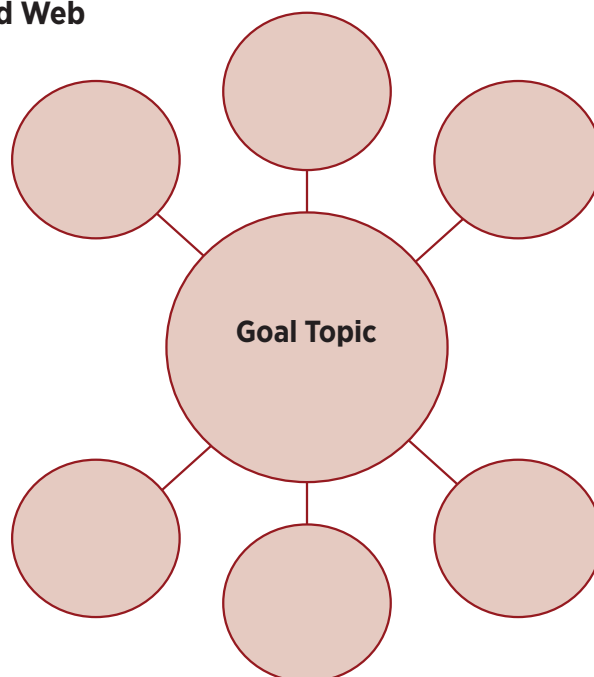
### Central Ideas and Practice

1. Using graphic organizers can help us organize information and ideas. Some reasons why graphic organizers can be helpful in writing goals include:
  - a. providing a guide to help us think about how ideas are related
  - b. helping us to think through information now rather than procrastinating
  - c. helping us to group similar ideas into categories
2. Ask learners to share experiences they have had using graphic organizers in the past. What kinds have they used? What worked well for them? What did not work as well?
3. Introduce the Word Web graphic organizer.
  - a. Introduce the Word Web. This graphic organizer gives us space to write a topic to begin with and then connect it to other ideas. One helpful way to use a Word Web for goal setting is for learners to write a goal topic in the middle circle and use the other circles as spaces to write ideas about how they might work to achieve that goal.

### Application

Provide time for learners to work with the organizer and let them know that brainstorming with a partner can be helpful as they begin this process. Move around the room to provide additional support as learners are brainstorming. Learners may have questions about completing the organizer because it may be a new tool.

### Example Goal-Setting Word Web





A large, abstract teal graphic on the left side of the page, featuring a large, irregular shape that tapers towards the bottom, with a smaller, curved shape extending from its upper right side.

## Section 2: Define Goals

**Scenario 2: What Does Success Look Like for Me and My Family?**

**Background Information**

Types of Goals

Long-Term Goals and Short-Term Goals

How to Define Goals

**Activity: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals**

**Activity: Step-by-Step Goals: Categorize and Prioritize**

## Section 2: Define Goals

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### Scenario 2: What Does Success Look Like for Me and My Family

Staff at Catholic Charities of Louisville, Kentucky, used a holistic family-centered approach that was driven by personal and family interest. Goal setting began as a process of thinking about the future and motivating families to make it happen. This process guided each family to organize its time and to make the most of it. With this effort, the program valued goal setting and achievement as a vehicle for happiness, self-confidence, and the recognition of personal strengths and abilities.

Specific types of goals were identified with follow-up questions, including:

- *Career: What do you want to accomplish in your employment? How can the agency support you? What are you good at and would you like to do in the future?*
- *Financial: How much money do you want to make? How is this related to your family and career goals?*
- *Education: What would you like to learn more about?*
- *Family: How would you like to grow as a parent? How do you want to be seen by your spouse and children? How do you know your child is learning in school? How can you help your child do well in school?*
- *Skills: What kind of new skills will support your short-term and long-term goals?*
- *Physical and Mental Health: What steps are you going to take to live a healthy life?*
- *Vacation: How do you rest? How would you like to enjoy yourself?*
- *Family Service Learning: How do you want to make your community a better place to live?*

Reflective questions identified steps to achieving the goal, including:

- *How do I overcome the challenges that I face?*
- *What does success look like for me and my family? What do I want out of life?*
- *How am I motivated to accomplish what I want for myself and my family?*
- *What is the benefit of achieving this goal for me and my family?*

From reflective and specific questions like these, facilitators worked with parents to define what they wanted to accomplish and to plan the next steps. Families began with small goals such as regular home

routines like cleaning the house. Then, they thought through what each step of that process would be and planned. For example, as a family, they talked through questions like: *Will we need to get up early? Do we need to buy cleaning supplies? Should we ask someone in the family to help? If yes, how are we going to delegate responsibilities?* Families also worked with larger literacy-based goals. The steps of this process were identified and might have included going to school, looking for additional classes, reading at home, or finding a mentor. With both sets of goals, facilitators worked with families to identify resources through Catholic Charities and in the local community.

***Goals can be broken down into specific objectives to create actionable steps for success.***

Goal setting and achievement positively impact the entire family when individuals are motivated to decide what they want to do and then to make the plan to achieve that vision. Facilitators support families in this process by helping to identify the smaller objectives that make the bigger vision possible. Prioritizing is key when families have more than one goal. This allows families to direct their attention toward the goals that are more important.



*Enemy Swim Day School, Waubay, SD*

## Background Information

### Types of Goals

There are many types of goals. Goals can focus on topics including basic needs, employment, education, health, and family (Lauby, 2019). These goals can be long-term or short-term. Specific objectives outline steps for achieving goals. A person might actually be working toward several goals at the same time. We can guide learners to think about the different types of goals and which ones make the most sense for now and for later.

Again, common topics for goal setting include employment, education, skill-building, finances, health, relationships, community, and family (Lauby, 2019; Radar, 2015). When working with learners on goal setting, you may want to think about the types of services offered through your program. Encourage learners to set goals focused on topics that are directly related to the program. By targeting certain topics, you can help learners monitor their progress and provide support where needed. Think about the different types of goals and how they fit within the goal setting component of your program.

## Long-Term and Short-Term Goals

Goals can be big and take months or years to complete. For example, a learner might want a high-school equivalency degree, or parents might want their children to finish high school. These goals are an individual’s vision for the future. The goals point individuals in the direction that they want to move. However, they may be difficult to achieve in a reasonable timeframe if they lack the specificity that inspires action. They may be challenging to evaluate.

Long-term goals will be achieved over an extended period while short-term goals can be reached in a brief amount of time. Short-term goals can be objectives, or steps, to achieving larger goals. A realistic short-term goal might be accomplished in days, weeks, or months. A long-term goal might take a year or more to achieve. While there is no definitive amount of time that separates short-term from long-term goals, generally a year is a good dividing point. The chart below includes examples of related long-term and short-term goals that an individual learner might set.

Examples of Related Goals	
Long-Term Goal	Short-Term Goal
Earning a high-school equivalency degree	Mastering division skills and concepts
Obtaining a job in the cyber-security industry	Enrolling in a cyber-security training program
Developing better family relationships	Eating dinner together as a family three nights per week
Develop leadership skills	Participate in a Family Service Learning® project
Support children’s education	Use PACT Time® activities at home

Therefore, long-term goals can be addressed with more specific, targeted short-term goals. These short-term goals may suggest a specific action or approach that a learner can take. For example, for the long-term goal of earning a high school equivalency degree, a short-term goal could be: I will master fraction concepts.

## How to Define Goals

Clearly defined goals are essential to success. When goals are too easy, unrealistic, or boundless, they can lead to feelings of frustration and failure. So, rather than jumping right into goal writing, facilitators can support learners by helping them to understand how to define goals. Learners need opportunities to explore what well-defined goals look and sound like. Facilitators can use modeling and examples to support this learning. One useful method is to set S.M.A.R.T. goals. This is detailed below.

### S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Setting S.M.A.R.T. goals is a specific goal setting strategy that can be used with different types of goals (Doran, 1981). The acronym S.M.A.R.T. refers to five characteristics of meaningful goals:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant or Results-based
- Timely or Time-bound

Doran (1981) notes that not every goal will have all five characteristics. However, goals that are written with five characteristics in mind tend to be clearly outlined and actionable. The chart below explores the characteristics through descriptive questions.

Characteristic	Description
Specific	Does the goal clearly say what it seeks to accomplish? Does it name who is involved? Does it set up a time frame?
Measurable	Does the goal set an objective? Does it suggest a method for measuring success? How will I know if I have successfully met my goal?
Attainable	Is the goal practical considering the resources available? Can it be completed within a reasonable amount of time?
Results-Based	Does the goal move me toward a substantial and meaningful change? Does the goal address an issue or problem?
Time-Bound	Is this the appropriate time to work toward this goal? Can it be completed in the timeframe established?



## Using the S.M.A.R.T. Method

The S.M.A.R.T. method provides a template for clearly defining goals that include a measure of success.

- Begin by modeling for learners how to write a goal statement. Then break it down into action steps or more achievable short-term goals. Consider setting a goal that the whole class might work toward together. Group goal setting activities allow learners to experience defining and monitoring progress toward a goal before they tackle their own individual goals.
- Learners can use templates that outline the characteristics of S.M.A.R.T. goals to write their own goals. Encourage learners to write one or two long-term goals using the S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Success handout in the Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals Activity. Provide opportunities for learners to share their goals and seek your feedback.
- Once learners have written their S.M.A.R.T. goals, the next step will be to have them think about the steps they need to take to achieve those goals and to prioritize the steps. Use the Step-by-Step Goal Setting Activity and handout included in this section.
- A well-defined goal is a destination. Learners still need a road map to help them achieve their goals. We can guide learners to write an action plan that identifies the interim steps that will eventually lead to the successful attainment of the goal. We will tackle this in Section 3. By working together to create a plan, we can help learners establish a method for monitoring progress towards completion of their goals.

### Activity: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

#### Materials:

S.M.A.R.T. Goals Worksheet, S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Success handout, pencils/pens.

In this activity, learners will be able to determine if a goal is a S.M.A.R.T. goal and write a S.M.A.R.T. goal.

#### Central Ideas and Practice

1. Discuss why creating goals is important. Some key reasons include:

- Creating goals helps give us specific steps to take toward achieving something we want to achieve...like those dreams from the vision boards! Dreams are important. However, to make dreams reality, it is important to set goals that lead to making the dreams come true.
- Setting goals helps us understand which things are most important to us.
- Setting goals helps us think about the steps required to achieve what we want.
- Creating S.M.A.R.T. goals can help us think about achievement within a timeframe.

2. Introduce S.M.A.R.T. goals. Discuss what the acronym means—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Based, Time-Bound. Share example and non-examples.
3. As an optional activity to practice writing S.M.A.R.T. goals, distribute the S.M.A.R.T. Goals Worksheet. This asks learners to determine if the example goals are S.M.A.R.T. goals.
4. Discuss how learners can move from an idea that they visualized to a goal that they want to achieve.
5. If learners already created a vision board, ask them to choose one of the pictures. With that picture, ask them to write a S.M.A.R.T. goal that could help them achieve one of their dreams. Learners may work together to think about specific goals and consider how long it may take to complete a goal. Be sure to move around the room to provide guidance. Think about using word webs as a support to the process.
6. Explain to learners that when they write goals they often think of long-term goals. These are goals that they may not complete for several months or even a year or longer. Short-term goals may be achieved in a day or a few weeks. Sometimes there are many short-term goals that help them to achieve a long-term goal.
7. Discuss how the learners could introduce the concept of goal setting to their children. Explain that it is easier to begin with short-term goals when talking with young children because they are able to focus in the short-term more easily.

# S.M.A.R.T. Goals Worksheet

Look at each of the following goals. Decide if they are S.M.A.R.T. goals. If so, write S.M.A.R.T. in the space below the statement. If not, identify which criteria is missing and revise the goals to make them S.M.A.R.T.

## Remember S.M.A.R.T. goals are:

**S=Specific:** Clarify what/how much.

**M=Measurable:** How I will know when I get there.

**A=Achievable:** Challenging, yet achievable.

**R=Results-based:** Worth pursuing, important.

**T=Time-bound:** Target the finish time.

1. This week I will read to my child for 15 minutes each day.
2. I will save money for a new phone this month.
3. I will get a library card.
4. I will finish in the top 10 of a 5K race by the end of the calendar year.
5. I will exercise more each day this month.

## My S.M.A.R.T. goal:

# S.M.A.R.T. Goals of Success

S.M.A.R.T.	Sample Goal	My Goal
<b>S</b> <b>Specific</b> What will I do?	I will master converting decimals to fractions.	
<b>M</b> <b>Measurable</b> How will I know I met the goal?	I will earn 90% or better on classroom assessments.	
<b>A</b> <b>Achievable</b> Is the goal possible with the resources I have available?	I practice with my class and at home. I can do this!	
<b>R</b> <b>Results-based</b> What results do I want to experience?	I will be able to convert common decimals w/out a calculator and less common ones with a calculator.	
<b>T</b> <b>Time-bound</b> By when will I achieve this goal?	I will achieve this goal within the next 5 weeks.	

**My goal statement:**

## Activity: Step-by-Step Goals: Categorize and Prioritize

**Materials:** Step-by-Step Goal Setting Handout, monthly calendar, pens/pencils

### Central Ideas and Practice

1. Ask learners to think about how many steps it takes to reach a goal. Does the number change depending on the type of goal? Can the number increase or decrease in the middle of the process if the situation changes? Discuss.
2. Explain how short-term and long-term goals differ. Ask how achieving short-term goals can lead to achieving long-term goals. Ask how the two might be connected.
3. Share the following example of the goal of getting a job or create your own to share from a personal story.

### Categorize and Prioritize: Get a Job

#### Job Search

1. What I am good at?
2. Explore jobs in the area.
3. How about the pay?
4. Find out who is hiring.
5. Talk to people doing this job.

#### Qualify for Jobs

1. Get experience.
2. Write/Update my resume.
3. Get references.
4. Brush up on my skills.

#### Personal

1. Arrange transportation.
2. Arrange childcare.
3. Plan my outfit.
4. Have a back-up plan.

#### Apply for a Job

1. Learn about the worksite.
2. Fill out the application.
3. Practice for the interview.
4. Do the interview.

## Application

- a. Have learners choose one goal that they really want to accomplish and write it in the blank on the Step-by-step Goal Setting handout.
- b. Give them time to brainstorm all the steps they will need to take to achieve this goal. Ask them if they can group the steps into categories. Then have them think about which steps need to happen first.
- c. Have pairs of learners 1) review each other's steps to reach their goals; 2) give each other feedback; 3) discuss how long it might take to complete the steps; 4) think about what resources, information, skills, and help they will need.
- d. Have learners reflect on their goal. Remind them to think about S.M.A.R.T. goals and to be sure their goal is a S.M.A.R.T. goal. (Help the learners rewrite their goal into the S.M.A.R.T. format if necessary.) Ask, "Does this goal inspire you? Are you ready to do the work it takes to accomplish this goal?"
- e. Provide a monthly calendar and have learners think about when they are going to work on the steps to achieve their goal; have them designate times on the calendar to work on their goal.
- f. Have learners make a plan for the following day, week, or month and write specific actions they will take on the calendar. Ask, "What first steps did you decide to take? When will you take them?"

# Step-By Step Goal Setting: Categorize and Prioritize

Choose one goal you want to accomplish. Write it in the blank below. Then think about the steps you will need to take to achieve this goal. You may find that the steps can be grouped into categories. If you can group the steps into categories, use one box for each category. When you have all the steps you can think of, put them in the order that makes sense to you. Then answer the questions on the back of the sheet.

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

1.  
2.  
3.

1.  
2.  
3.

1.  
2.  
3.

1.  
2.  
3.

*How long will these steps take?*

*What skills do I need?*

*What resources do I need?*

*What help do I need?*

*What information do I need?*





## Section 3: Track Goals

**Scenario 3: How Do We Make the Program Work for Our Families?**

**Background Information**

How to Track Progress Toward Goals

**Activity: Goal Achievement Plan**

**Activity: Goal Priorities**

**Activity: Adult Goals Tracking Form**

## Section 3: Track Goals

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### Scenario 3: How Do We Make the Program Work for Our Families?

Staff in the Toyota Family Learning program at San Mateo County Libraries in San Mateo, California, used a data-informed process to guide parents in setting goals for their participation in the program. In the Initial Family Interview that is part of the data collected by the program and provided to the evaluator, parents noted how important several goals in a list were for them.

A couple of weeks into the program, parents received a copy of their responses and a short discussion was facilitated on the various goals among the whole group. Then the parents were divided into small groups per highest priority goal clusters and given a piece of paper with a silhouette in the middle of it. The parents were instructed to draw themselves in the silhouette and create a vision board around it to show the highest priority goal they had. The session ended with an opportunity for parents who wanted to share their vision board with the rest of the parents to describe what they included.

During the next session, staff introduced and explained the S.M.A.R.T. approach to goals and created a sample goal with the group. Once the group understood the concept, parents got into their groups from the previous session and wrote their own S.M.A.R.T. goals with support from their group and the facilitators. In the goal priority groups, learners worked together to decide action steps that would help them start to work on their goals. The groups also embraced the idea that they could be accountability partners for each other by setting common action steps that would help them all work toward their goal since they had the same priority area.

Accountability groups of parents continued to check in with and encourage each other as parents worked to achieve their goals. Facilitators were also able to provide targeted support to groups when they worked together around their priority areas because they had a similar focus. This made it easier for staff members to keep track of parents' goals and the progress they were making toward achieving them.

Using a data-driven approach to goal setting and tracking is an important way to ensure that programming meets the needs of the participants. Facilitators can make small adjustments or large changes to programming to meet participants' goals. No matter the degree of customization that can be made, participants are more likely to feel connected to a program and have regular attendance if they can see how the program is meeting their needs.



*San Mateo County Libraries, San Mateo, California*

## Background Information

### How to Track Progress Toward Goals

There is no single way to track progress toward a goal. Tracking progress toward an employment goal might look different than tracking progress toward an academic goal or a family goal. However, you can create flexible progress tracking routines that allow learners to see when they are making progress and when they need more support.

- You may want to use the **Adult Goals Tracking Form** to record one or two high priority goals for each learner. If you want to track two goals for a student, think about printing two sheets. Track one goal on each. Keep these goals in mind as you prepare lessons. Note learners' progress toward these goals.
- Learners can create goal journals. Have learners decorate the covers of composition notebooks with pictures or images related to their goals. Then each week encourage learners to write or draw about the progress they are making towards their goals. This opportunity for self-reflection allows learners to think about what is going well and what struggles they are encountering. It can also help you know which learners need more support.
- Learners' plans can be used to create checklists. Learners can note the dates when they achieve each interim step towards their long-term goals. Note the progress that learners are making, and provide support when learners appear stuck on a step.
- When learners set S.M.A.R.T. goals, the goals are measurable. You can develop ways to assess and chart progress based on these measurements.

## Activity: Goal Achievement Plan

**Materials:** Goal Achievement Plan Template handout for each learner, pens/pencils.

### Central Ideas and Practice

1. Explain to learners that having well-defined goals is an important first step, but a clear plan can help them make sure that they know what steps they will follow to meet the goals. Some important information to share about action plans includes:
  - a. They can help break down long-term goals that may require several steps to achieve.
  - b. They may be used as a checklist for learners to make sure they are on track for reaching their goals.
  - c. They help us build a habit of looking at the steps for reaching a goal. This can make a goal seem easier to reach.
2. Ask learners if they have had experiences they can share about a time when they set a goal but did not achieve it. Provide time for two or three learners to share a goal and an idea of why they did not achieve it.
3. Explain that writing out an plan includes naming what barriers might keep us from achieving our goals. Sharing the plan with another person makes us more likely to achieve our goal. Knowing the barriers helps us be ready to overcome them when we experience them. Barriers that learners might share include childcare, lack of family/partner support, single parent pressure, chronic illness, work schedule, fear of failure, and transportation.
4. The template includes space to track completion of the action steps and any notes about working toward a goal. This additional step can help learners monitor their progress through their plan.

### Application

Ask learners to choose a long-term goal they are planning to work to achieve. Ask them to list steps that will be necessary to achieve this goal. It may be easier to make a brainstorming list on scrap paper before writing those steps in the Goal Achievement Plan Template. As learners complete their lists, tell them that it may help them organize their ideas if they number the list in order of actions they need to complete and then write them on the template. Guide learners to add their steps to the template, providing support as needed.

# Goal Achievement Plan Template

**Goal:** \_\_\_\_\_

Step	Expect to Complete by Date	Barriers	Ways to Overcome Barriers	Date Completed/ Notes

## Activity: Goal Priorities

**Materials:** Goal and Effect Goal Organizer handout for each learner, pens/pencils

### Central Ideas and Practice

1. Ask learners to share briefly about their goals. Do they have many goals? What kind of goals do they want to achieve? How do they decide which goal is most important?
2. Explain that it is important to understand which of our goals are short-term goals that we can achieve quickly, and which ones are long-term goals that we may need more time to achieve. Share reasons why goal priorities are important.
  - a. We often have short-term goals that help us to achieve longer-term goals.
  - b. Some people work toward a few goals in different areas at the same time.
  - c. Deciding the priority level of goals can help learners focus on the goals that are most important at different times.
3. Share one or two examples of goals that learners might set, such as “I will pass the Math section of my high school equivalency test this year,” and ask learners to decide what the effect might be if someone achieved the goal. For example, the learner who passes the math test may get a raise at work because this shows skill with math. Explain that the goal is a cause and the raise is the effect.
4. Explain that sometimes it is helpful to start with the effect that we want to achieve, or the vision, and think back to what goal we might set to help us achieve that effect.

### Application

Ask learners to use the Goal and Effect Organizer to help them think about how their goals are connected with outcomes. When learners have listed two or three goal cause and effect pairs, ask them to mark the goals based on their importance. Number one is the highest priority, and goals become less of a priority as the numbers increase. Learners may want to create a timeline or priority list to help them remember which goals to focus on most in the near and far future.

# Goal and Effect Organizer

Priority#	Goal	Effect

*Which goal is your highest priority right now? Why?*

*How will you remember which goals to focus on most?*

*How can you organize your other goals to make sure you remember to work on them?*



## Activity: Adult Goals Tracking Form

**Materials:** Adult Goals Tracking Form handout for each learner, pens/pencils

### Central Ideas and Practice

1. This tool helps to keep track of the goals learners are working on and the progress they have made. It can be used to document ongoing achievement throughout a term or school year.
2. Fill out the form with each student, focusing on one specific goal. Use another page when learners are working on more than one goal.
3. Meet with learners regularly to reflect on their goals. On the tracking form, add the steps learners have taken that show their progress toward reaching each goal. These steps may include:
  - a. completing a unit of study
  - b. earning a certificate
  - c. reading a book
  - d. filling out applications for work
  - e. further education
  - f. completing a project
  - g. attending a community event
  - h. attending a school event
4. Add documentation regularly to support the notes that you add to the form.

# Adult Goals Tracking Form

Learner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal Area:** Circle one.

Education

Career

Parent Engagement

Community

Culture

Personal

**Specific Goal:**

**Date Set:**

Date	Progress Made to Meet Goal	Type of Documentation/Comments





## Section 4: Celebrate Success

Scenario 4: Goals Take Time—How Do We Get There?

Background Information

Celebrate Success

## Section 4: Celebrate Success

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### Scenario 4: Goals Take Time—How Do We Get There?

FACE program staff at Chief Leschi School in Puyallup, Washington, utilized goal-setting strategies that addressed the time it took to make progress toward goals and the topics of interest to parents. They found that goal setting and achievement takes time. It can take weeks, months, or even years. In addition to academic goals in adult education, parents had non-academic goals. These were related to health, parenting, culture, family, or other areas of personal interest.

Facilitators used weekly and monthly goal setting activities to guide discussions beyond yes and no questions. Parents identified and defined their goals by using goal setting inventories. One challenge was supporting parents in defining smaller goals that are necessary to achieve the bigger goals they have stated. Based on the rapport between teacher and student, reflective questions helped to overcome this hurdle.

Facilitators identified three important stages: planning, progress, and achievement:

**Planning:** In this stage, facilitators compiled stated learner goals on their class roster. This gave ease of access to facilitators when planning lessons that were driven by parent interest and parent goals. This also made it easier to prepare for individual meetings with parents.

**Progress:** As learners progressed through the class, facilitators periodically wrote letters and notes of encouragement for each parent. These notes were helpful during the year to motivate parents in attendance and participation. They were especially important at the end of each semester to support parents in their long-term journey toward achieving the goals they had set.

**Achievement:** At the end of the term, progress was celebrated. Certificates were given for achievement, recognition, and attendance. These recognized goal completion as well as small and big successes.

It is the strength of the rapport in the class and motivation to continue that supports parents over the long term. By utilizing strategies that focus on learner-stated goals, giving encouragement throughout the process, and celebrating achievement, facilitators support parents in their achievement of academic and non-academic goals.



Chief Leschi School, Puyallup, Washington

## Example Notes of Encouragement

*“Thank you so much for being a part of the FACE Adult Education class. You may not feel you are moving forward or going as fast as you want—but just know—most assuredly, you are! I see your challenges, but I see you overcome them each day. Don’t ever give up because I know you are going to make it.”*

*“You are such a hard worker. Remember to stop and take care of yourself. You have the most giving heart and your family truly relies on you. Remember to refresh, restore, and replenish. Keep faith in yourself and your abilities. You are almost at your AA degree, then you will move on to your BA degree. You will go far and have many successes!”*

# Background Information

## Celebrating Success

One of the most important aspects of goal setting is celebrating success. Learners can be celebrated for each step they take towards achieving their goals. By celebrating milestones as a regular part of the program, you can create an environment where progress is valued. Seeing their peers succeed can be very motivating for learners in a program.

*Encourage learners to recognize family members, classmates, and community members who supported their achievements.*

Recognizing large and small achievements is another part of celebrating success. For academic achievements, create a standard system for giving certificates of completion. For non-academic achievements, use creative ways to recognize learners through certificates and personal notes of encouragement. Bulletin boards and newsletters give visual representation to recognition. Ceremonies and community parties can be used strategically. These highlight the successes of individual and community milestones.

Appreciating the support of family members, classmates, and community members is important also. These are the individuals and groups who helped make achievements possible. Invite them to celebratory events when possible. Practice thank-you letter writing. Encourage learners to think about ways that they can support others toward their own goal achievements.

Ways to Acknowledge Success
Certificates of achievement
Personal note of encouragement
Bulletin board display
Newsletter recognition
Class or school-wide ceremony
Party
Thank-you letter

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# NOTES

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