

Queensland Child and Youth Clinical Network

SMART goals

Supporting parents to set healthy lifestyle goals with their children.

SMART goals are; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time specific.

SMART Goals can help children and their families make small and sustainable changes in health behaviours. As a health professional you can guide the child and family to set and agree upon SMART Goals. Exploring families' priorities, values and underlying motives for goals should be a part of the goal setting process.

Specific

Ensure the goal is clear. Some goals can be too broad, making it hard to know when they have been achieved.

- ✘ 'I want to eat more vegetables' is a broad goal.
- ✓ 'I want to eat two serves of vegetables at dinner every night' is specific.

Measurable

Make sure that it is clear what you need to do to achieve the goal.

- ✘ 'I want to eat more vegetables' is a goal that is hard to measure because there is no set amount or idea of frequency.
- ✓ 'I want to eat two serves of vegetables at dinner every night' is measurable.

Achievable

Make sure the goal can be achieved.

- ✘ 'I want to eat five serves of vegetables at dinner' would not be achievable if a child currently eats zero vegetables with their dinner.
- ✓ 'This week I want to eat two serves of vegetables with dinner and by the end of the month I want to eat five serves of vegetables with dinner.' Starting with smaller goals and increasing the challenge gradually makes the goal more achievable.



Realistic

Make sure the goal fits in with a child's everyday activities and commitments.

- ✗ 'I want to walk for 60 minutes each morning' may not be realistic if a child has to attend before school care.
- ✓ 'After school I want to play in the park' could be a more realistic goal.

Time specific

Make sure you set a time or date for when the goal is to be achieved.

- ✗ 'I want to eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables' does not outline when the goal will be achieved.
- ✓ 'In six months' time I want to eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables every day.' Setting a time or date for when the goal is to be achieved can boost motivation. Using consultation dates could be useful.

Questions that can help goal setting:

- "Would you like to make some changes towards a healthier growth....?"
- "What changes do you propose e.g. in nutrition, physical activity...?"
- "What could you achieve before the next consultation...?"
- "How can I help you achieve this...?"
- "Does that fit into your current routine/lifestyle...?"