



# EXPECT SUCCESS

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR ALL AGES



The idea of making New Year's resolutions has been around for years. It's kind of the "out with the old, in with the new" mantra that encourages us to improve areas of our life that need some working on. This month's article is taken in part from Scholastic.com and provides some general ideas that can be easily adapted to multiple ages of children (and adults). You can find the full article at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/parent-child/how-about-resolution>.

### Getting Started

The sentiment of starting the year anew could be lost on younger kids, so introduce the concept of resolutions to upper elementary-age children (say grades 3 and up). Simply stating your own pledge can open up a rich conversation. Be prepared to discuss, discuss, discuss!

The next step is asking your child if he has any ideas for a resolution of his own. Encourage him by challenging the rest of the family to come up with similar resolutions. For example, if your child wants to improve his reading skills, invite everyone else to come up with one reading-related resolution or if she wants to drink more water and less sugary drinks, encourage the family to make the same commitment. There are many cool resolution templates online.

### I resolve to . . .

- ◇ **Be more organized!** Your child can make the most of his time by making sure he knows how to take notes, organize his work, and schedule his life with a planner. Once the clutter is vanquished, homework and studying will be simpler — and he'll have more time for fun.
- ◇ **Break a bad habit!** Biting your nails, too much TV, computer or cell phone time: all are great candidates for kick-the-habit New Year's resolutions. Quitting a habit can be tough so find ways to encourage your child, she may need multiple reminders to help meet her resolution. Perseverance and determination are life-long skills.
- ◇ **Cut down on soda!** Ring in the New Year by making sugary, caffeinated drinks a treat, not an all-the-time beverage. After 2 p.m., implement a "decaf-only" rule so your child isn't wide awake at bedtime. Substituting other liquids (such as water, milk, or juice) at dinner will make it easier to sit down and concentrate on homework in the evening.
- ◇ **Eat healthier foods!** Encourage your child to get balanced when it comes to eating. Not only will this resolution help your child's body, but there are benefits for his brain too! And while switching from sugary snacks to nutritional noshes can be a difficult transition for kids, it doesn't mean **treats** have to go away completely or forever. Try using the term "cutting back" instead of "giving up" — it'll make the task less daunting.
- ◇ **Get a good night's sleep!** Snoozing for at least eight hours per night can increase energy and boost concentration. Encourage reading in the evening, instead of stimulating activities such as TV, Web-surfing, or video games.
- ◇ **Improve academic habits!** While it's honorably ambitious to declare "I want to get all A's," your child might feel crushed if she doesn't make the grade on her first test. Instead, suggest that she aim to change her study habits, starting with creating a kid-friendly workspace. Try to be involved in her homework routine — listen to the frustrations she might have with a certain subject, and work together to find a solution. Regularly check grades online and attend parent-teacher conferences to let her know that academics are important.
- ◇ **Move my body!** Exercise is important for a healthy heart and brain, so spend time each day working up a sweat. Even if your child isn't involved in organized sports, you can still feel the burn with a daily walk together or a fun game (think Dance Dance Revolution). The high school weight room is open daily and is a free resource too!